

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5310
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 18834

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, PEPR, UR, US
SUBJECT: ANDROPOV REFLECTS CHANGING SOVIET PERSPECTIVES
ON DETENTE

SUMMARY: THE FOREIGN POLICY ASPECTS OF ANDROPOV'S
AUGUST 5 SPEECH AT PETROZAVODSK (SUMMARIZED IN
PRAVDA OF AUGUST 6 -- ASSUME DEPARTMENT HAS TEXT)
STRIKE US AS INTERESTING PRIMARILY BECAUSE THEY CON-
TINUE A TREND IN LEADERSHIP DISCUSSION OF DETENTE
WHEREIN DETENTE IS PRAISED FOR THE BENEFITS IT
BRINGS TO SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY IN AREAS OTHER THAN
SOVIET-U.S. RELATIONS. WE FEEL THAT THIS SHIFT IN
EMPHASIS, WHICH HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY EVIDENT
IN RECENT WEEKS, REPRESENTS A POSSIBLE INDICATION
OF DISCUSSIONS WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP OVER THE MERITS
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AND DEMERITS OF IMPROVED SOVIET-U.S. RELATIONS AS
THE KEY ELEMENT IN THE "RELAXATION OF INTERNATIONAL
TENSIONS," AND OF A DECISION TO STRIKE A PUBLIC
BALANCE MORE HEAVILY ON THE SIDE OF THE "IDEOLOGICAL
STRUGGLE" ASPECT OF DETENTE. IN HIS SPEECH,
ANDROPOV DESCRIBES THE ATTITUDES TOWARD DETENTE
OF THREE GROUPS OF "THE BOURGEOISIE" IN THE WEST,

CONDEMNS PLAYING THE "CHINA CARD," AND CITES
SOVIET-FINNISH RELATIONS AS AN EXAMPLE OF DETENTE
IN ACTION. END SUMMARY.

1. ANDROPOV'S AUGUST 5 SPEECH IN PETROZAVODSK
STRIKES US AS SIGNIFICANT PRIMARILY FOR ITS
CHARACTERIZATION OF DETENTE IN A MANNER WHICH REFLECTS
LITTLE EXPECTATION THAT SOVIET-U.S. RELATIONS WILL
PROSPER AND PRAISES DETENTE AS ADVANCING CLASS
STRUGGLE. IN OUR VIEW, THE SALIENT ELEMENTS OF
THE SPEECH INCLUDE ANDROPOV'S:

-- CLAIM THAT THE ADMINISTRATION "IS PRONE TO RETREAT
UNDER THE PRESSURE OF THE ENEMIES OF DETENTE"
BECAUSE "AMERICAN IMPERIALISM" HAS FOUND IT DIFFICULT
TO "RESHAPE ITS POLICY IN CONFORMITY WITH THE NEW
REALITIES OF INTERNATIONAL LIFE;"

-- DESCRIPTION OF DETENTE AS A PROCESS WHICH
"STIMULATES THE PROCESS OF POSITIVE SOCIAL CHANGES,"
ASSISTS THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING CLASS IN
"BOURGEOIS" COUNTRIES, GIVES FREE REIN TO "PRO-
GRESSIVE TENDENCIES," AND "FORCES THE RULING CIRCLES
OF CAPITALIST COUNTRIES TO ADAPT THEMSELVES TO
THESE TENDENCIES;"

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-- CHARACTERIZATION OF THREE KEY GROUPS IN THE WEST:
THOSE WHO RECOGNIZE THE INEVITABILITY OF ACCOMODATING
TO DETENTE, THOSE WHO WISH TO RETURN TO THE COLD
WAR, AND THOSE (APPARENTLY INCLUDING THE U.S. ADMINI-
STRATION) WHO SEEK LIMITED AGREEMENTS BUT FEAR THE
INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC CHANGES WHICH DETENTE
ENTAILS AND WHOSE ACTIVITY THEREFORE IS MARKED BY
"INSTABILITY, VACILLATION;"

-- CONDEMNATION OF THOSE WHO PLAY THE "CHINA CARD;"

-- ASSERTION THAT "OUR STRATEGIC LINE REMAINS
UNCHANGED;"

-- REGRET THAT "COLD WINDS" BLOWING FROM THE U.S.
HAVE AFFECTED WESTERN EUROPE; AND HIS

-- CITATION OF SOVIET RELATIONS WITH FINLAND AS AN
EXAMPLE OF DETENTE IN ACTION SINCE THESE RELATIONS,
HE CLAIMS, ARE BASED ON "AN INTEGRAL AND STABLE
SYSTEM OF COOPERATION UNDER EQUAL RIGHTS."

2. COMMENT: WE ARE STRUCK BY ANDROPOV'S

DESCRIPTION OF DETENTE AS GIVING IMPETUS TO CHANGE
IN FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICIES IN THE WEST.
ANDROPOV'S PURPOSE APPEARS TO BE TO BOLSTER THE
PRACTICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION FOR DETENTE.
HE PASSES OVER QUICKLY THE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS OF
COOLING SOVIET-U.S. RELATIONS WHILE ATTRIBUTING THIS
COOLING TO "VACILLATIONS" OF WASHINGTON IN THE FACE
OF THE SO-CALLED OBJECTIVE CHANGES IN THE WORLD
BROUGHT ABOUT BY DETENTE ITSELF. IN THIS WAY
ANDROPOV CONTINUES A RECENT SOVIET LEADERSHIP
PRACTICE (BREZHNEV IN MINSK, GROMYKO TO THE SUPREME
SOVIET) OF APPEARING TO STAND ABOVE THE DAY-TO-DAY

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QUESTIONS OF SOVIET-U.S. RELATIONS IN ORDER TO
CONTINUE TO JUSTIFY CURRENT SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY,
AND PARTICULARLY THE POLICY OF DETENTE, ON THE
BASIS OF THEIR IMPUTED SUCCESSES.

3. THE AMOUNT OF ATTENTION DEVOTED TO DETENTE LATELY
IN THE SOVIET INFORMATION MEDIA, AND PARTICULARLY
ITS JUSTIFICATION IN TERMS AS STARK AS ANDROPOV'S,
SUGGESTS TO US THAT RECENT SETBACKS IN SOVIET-U.S.
RELATIONS MAY HAVE OCCASIONED SOME DISCUSSION IN
MOSCOW CONCERNING THE NATURE AND GOALS OF DETENTE.
THERE MAY BE SOME IN THE LEADERSHIP WHO HAD DOUBTS

ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF COOPERATION WITH THE U.S.
AND MAY HAVE USED RECENT EVENTS TO REINFORCE
THEIR QUESTIONING OF DETENTE. IF SO, SOVIET
STATEMENTS DEFINING DETENTE, AS IN BREZHNEV'S SPEECH
IN MINSK AND ANDROPOV'S SPEECH IN PETROZAVODSK, MAY
HAVE BEEN INTENDED TO JUSTIFY THIS POLICY IN TERMS
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WHICH CANNOT BE CHALLENGED EVEN BY THE MOST
CONSERVATIVE SKEPTIC.

4. IN CITING SOVIET-FINNISH RELATIONS AS A MODEL
OF DETENTE RELATIONSHIPS, ANDROPOV PRESUMABLY
CALCULATED THAT THE UNEASINESS (I.E., CONCERNING
THE "FINLANDIZATION" OF EUROPE) CAUSED IN THE
WEST BY THIS STATEMENT WOULD BE MORE THAN BALANCED
BY THE REASSURANCE THAT THIS FORMULATION WOULD
GIVE TO THOSE WITHIN THE USSR WHO MAY HAVE FEARED
THAT DETENTE HAS MEANT GIVING AWAY TOO MUCH TO THE
IDEOLOGICAL ENEMY. IF THIS INDEED WAS ANDROPOV'S
CALCULATION, IT SUGGESTS THAT THE SPEECH AND THE
CURRENT SOVIET EFFORT TO GIVE DESCRIPTIVE DEFINITION
TO DETENTE ARE INTENDED PRIMARILY FOR A DOMESTIC
RATHER THAN A FOREIGN AUDIENCE.

5. SINCE THE TERM DETENTE WAS FORMERLY USED AS
A SHORTHAND DESCRIPTION OF IMPROVED SOVIET-U.S.
RELATIONS, A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT BALANCE HAS TO BE
STRUCK TO ACCOUNT FOR COOLER RELATIONS WITH THE U.S.
WHILE STILL JUSTIFYING PURSUIT OF DETENTE. THE
SOVIETS HAVE ALWAYS MADE CLEAR THAT DETENTE DID
NOT MEAN AN EASING OF THE INTERNATIONAL "CLASS
STRUGGLE." NOW IT SEEMS THAT THE BENEFITS OF
DETENTE TO SOVIET INTEREST IN THIS COMPETITION ARE
BEING GIVEN GREATER EMPHASIS IN SOVIET PUBLIC
RHETORIC, AND THAT MOSCOW IS CONSCIOUSLY DOWNPLAYING
THE ROLE OF SOVIET-U.S. RELATIONS IN THE PURSUIT
OF WHAT IT CALLS DETENTE. TOON

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